

Town of Egremont, MA
Annual Town Meeting

May 3, 2022

On Tuesday May 3, 2022 at 6:09 pm at The Catamount Lodge on Hillsdale Road, Egremont, Moderator Stephen Cohen called the meeting to order. Moderator Cohen attested to the proper service of the warrant, noted the presence of a quorum, gave instructions for the meeting and introduced Town Officials. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited and a moment of silence to honor the victims of COVID-19, the suffering in Ukraine and to thank members of the military, police and fire departments for their service was observed.

ARTICLE 1: Selectboard Chairman George McGurn gave his appreciation to those in attendance and thanked the staff at Catamount Lodge. Chairman McGurn then spoke to the months of work that went into the warrant especially under the challenges of COVID. He mentioned the work ahead on the updated Master Plan and invited residents to participate. He also spoke to the soon-to-be redesigned town website which will be up and available soon.

ARTICLE 2: Motion made and seconded to raise and appropriate the following sums for the following items. Laura Allen of the Finance Committee spoke to her committee's approval of the budget. Moderator Cohen read the section headings and section amount figures only. Questions and holds on items within the sections are noted. Voting was done by section.

1. OFFICIALS AND BOARDS	\$ 439,642.00
A. Accounting Officer Expense	1,500.00
B. Accounting Officer	14,966.00
C. Agricultural Commission	800.00
D. Assessors Clerical	3,602.00
E. Assessor's Consulting	38,000.00
F. Assessor's Expense	2,250.00
G. Assessor #1 Salary	5,128.00
H. Assessor #2 Salary	5,128.00
I. Assessor #3 Salary	5,128.00
J. Board of Appeals Expense	100.00
K. Board of Health Expense	4,500.00
L. Board of Health Director	39,866.00
M. Health Alliance Services	11,500.00
N. Building Inspector Salary	34,211.00

O. Asst. Building Inspector	1,500.00
P. Conservation Comm. Expense	2,520.00
Q. Conservation Agent	1,000.00
R. Conservation Comm. Clerical	3,500.00
S. Constable's Salary	706.00
T. Finance Committee Expense	400.00
U. Grant Administrator	10,000.00
V. Inspectors' Expenses	2,130.00
W. Personnel Director	13,004.00
X. Planning Board Expense	3,575.00
Y. Selectmen Office Administrator	73,952.00
Z. Selectmen Office Expense	13,200.00
AA. Selectman #1 Salary	5,729.00
BB. Selectman #2 Salary	5,316.00
CC. Selectman #3 Salary	5,316.00
DD. Green Committee Expenses	381.00
EE. Town Clerk Expense	7,000.00
FF. Town Clerk Salary	15,513.00
GG. Town Hall Office Clerk	31,816.00
HH. Treasurer/Collector Expense	11,545.00
II. Treasurer/Collector Salary	64,860.00
JJ. Treasurer/Collector Clerk	0.00

Vote taken: Items within the section passed by unanimous show of hands.

2. TOWN EXPENSES	\$ 339,750.00
A. Animal Control Officer	2,790.00
B. Animal Control Expenses	1,000.00
C. Audit	8,717.00
D. Board of Registrars Salary	50.00
E. Broadband Backup Operations	3,000.00
F. Compactor Operation	117,495.00
G. Compactor Substitute Wages	16,596.00
H. Computer Expenses	99,816.00
I. Computer Administrator	5,700.00

J. Drug and Alcohol Tests	360.00
K. Egremont Newsletter	3,500.00
L. Election Wages	4,500.00
M. Group Purchasing	1,310.00
N. Geographic Information System	4,400.00
O. High Speed Internet	2,871.00
P. Email Archiving/back-up	0.00
Q. Historical Commission Expense	2,050.00
R. Inspector of Animals	500.00
S. Legal Expenses	2,000.00
T. Legal Fees	18,000.00
U. Litigation	7,000.00
V. Moderator	344.00
W. Public Health Services	2,469.00
X. School Committee	2,272.00
Y. School Crossing Guard	500.00
Z. Southern Berkshire Chamber Commerce	260.00
AA. Town Engineer	4,450.00
BB. Town Report	300.00
CC. Town Telephone	7,500.00
DD. Veteran's Benefits	20,000.00

Vote taken: items within the section passed by a unanimous show of hands.

3. TOWN MAINTENANCE	\$ 261,511.00
A. Bldg Maint. General Exp.	22,235.00
B. Bldg Maint. Utility Exp.	34,650.00
C. Building Maintenance Wages	14,574.00
D. Maintenance Superintendent	62,640.00
E. Cemetery Maintenance	1,100.00
F. French Park Maintenance	3,000.00
G. French Park Trail Stewardship	960.00
H. French Park Comm	1,500.00
I. French Park Overtime Wages	5,950.00
J. French Park Wages	13,758.00

K. Public Lighting	6,500.00
L. Building Improvements	24,500.00
M. Tree Work	40,000.00
N. Tree Warden	7,144.00
O. Cemetery Expense and Maintenance	23,000.00

Holds placed on F, G, H, I, J. Question asked as to whether these items were articles covered elsewhere in the warrant.

Vote taken: items within the section passed by majority show of hands.

4. HIGHWAYS	\$ 619,475.00
A. Const. & Maint. Wages	5,000.00
B. Construction & Maintenance	202,300.00
C. Vehicle Maintenance/Repairs	62,100.00
D. Highway Union	179,454.00
E. Superintendent Salary	75,621.00
F. Snow & Ice Removal	70,000.00
G. Snow & Ice Removal Wages	25,000.00

Vote taken: items within the section passed by unanimous show of hands

5. LIBRARY	\$ 41,264.00
A. Expenses	14,475.00
B. Librarian's Salary	25,754.00
C. Library Substitute Wages	1,035.00

Vote taken: items within the section passed by unanimous show of hands.

6. POLICE	\$485,658.00
A. Chief Expenses	4,500.00
B. Chief Salary	90,761.00
C. Collective Bargaining	350,351.00
D. Department Expenses	11,500.00
E. Police Wages-Secretary	19,046.00
F. Vehicle Expenses	9,500.00

Vote taken: items within the section passed by unanimous show of hands.

7. FIRE AND EMERGENCY	\$145,991.00
A. Dispatch Facilities	11,960.00
B. Emergency Management	1,600.00
C. Emergency Management Wages	2,820.00
D. Fire Department Expense	57,400.00
E. Firefighters Stipend	35,000.00
F. Forest Fires	1,000.00
G. Fire Dept. Admin./Training	12,000.00
H. Fire Chief Pay	21,361.00
I. Street Number 911	100.00
J. Reverse 911 System	2,250.00
K. So Berk Reg Emergency Plan	500.00
L. So. Berk. Ambulance Squad	0.00

Vote taken: items within the section passed by unanimous show of hands.

8. DEBT AND INTEREST	\$ 269,378.00
A. Interest Short Term Debt	10,000.00
B. Highway Truck	61,081.00
C. Police Facility	0.00
D. Mt. Washington Rd Eng	59,029.00
E. Rescue Truck	67,999.00
F. Fire Truck	71,269.00

Vote taken: items within the section passed by majority show of hands.

9. HUMAN SERVICES	\$ 96,116.00
A. Brien Center/Mental Health	2,203.00
B. Berk South Community Center	2,000.00
C. Community Health Programs	1,000.00
D. Berk. Comm. Action Council	1,000.00
E. Construct, Inc.	2,000.00

F. Eagle Fund	1,000.00
G. Council on Aging	14,950.00
H. Egremont Garden Club	350.00
I. Elizabeth Freeman Center	500.00
J. Fairview Hospital	1,500.00
K. Housatonic Valley Assoc	300.00
L. Hospice Care	750.00
M. Railroad Street Youth Project	2,500.00
N. Public Transport	60,663.00
O. Literacy Network of So. Berk.	400.00
P. Friends of Prospect Lake	5,000.00

Holds placed on all in section. Question was raised as to why the town funds these charitable organizations. Answer given that the town covers gap private donations don't cover. Town receives yearly reports from these organizations.

Vote taken: items within the section passed by majority show of hands.

10. INSURANCE	\$ 713,563.00
A. Health/Dental	334,062.00
B. Pension	214,966.00
C. Property & Casualty	126,810.00
D. Social Security/Medicare	19,000.00
E. Unemployment	10,000.00
F. Longevity Pay	3,725.00
G. Sick Leave	5,000.00

Vote taken: items within the section passed by majority show of hands.

11. RESERVE FUND	\$ 25,000.00
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Hold placed on this section. Question asked whether these funds should be taken from the overlay surplus.

Vote taken: motion passed by majority show of hands.

12. SCHOOLS	\$ 1,957,732.00
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A. Operating & Transport	1,878,250.00
B. Capital Costs	36,275.00
C. Bond Payment	36,407.00
D. Vocational Education	6,800.00

Vote taken: motion passed by majority show of hands.

TOTAL LINE ITEM BUDGET APPROVED AT MEETING \$ 5,395,080.00

Article 3: Motion made and seconded to raise the amount of \$228,801, as spelled out in the warrant, from Water Department revenues.

A. Water Debt	\$ 0.00
B. Water Operating Exp	27,500.00
C. Salaries/Wages	81,250.00
D. Utilities	12,500.00
E. Office Expenses	5,500.00
F. Water System Maint., Repair, Replacement, Upgrade	37,500.00
G. Audit	4,500.00
H. Insurance	9,486.00
I. Software	2,100.00
J. Truck/Sander/Plow	48,474.00
K. Water Line Capital Upgrades	
Total	\$228,810.00

Necessary funds to be raised as follows:

Water Dept. Revenues	\$ 228,810.00
Retained earnings	0.00
Tax Levy subsidy	0.00

Holds placed on A (the debt has been retired), C (new part-time back up operator now required), J (this will be owned by the Water Department).

Vote taken: motion passed by majority show of hands.

Article 4: Motion made and seconded to authorize the Selectboard to form a study group to consider infrastructure, governance, and ownership options of the Egremont Water Department.

Vote taken: motion passed by majority show of hands.

Article 5: Motion made and seconded to appropriate \$2,000,000.00 to pay costs of making necessary water line upgrades and repairs to a portion of Main Street, including the payment of all other costs incidental or related thereto, and to that to meet this appropriation, the Treasurer, with the approval of the Select Board, is authorized to borrow said amount under and pursuant to G.L. c. 44, Section 8 (5) or any other enabling authority, and to issue bonds or notes of the Town therefor. While any amount authorized to be borrowed by this vote shall constitute a general obligation of the Town in accordance with the General Laws, any such borrowing is expected to be paid, in the first instance, from the Water Department enterprise fund.

Short discussion ensued as to what portion of Main Street will be covered and will the timeline work in coordination with the upcoming Main Street renovation.

Residents were instructed to use the dedicated ballot they received when they checked in and cast their vote by secret ballot.

Secret ballot taken: Moderator announced the motion passed by required 2/3 vote of 67 YES to 12 NO

Article 6: Motion made and seconded to fix the maximum amount that may be spent during fiscal year 2023 from the revolving funds established in Egremont General Bylaw 24, to be amounts specified in the warrant, such revolving funds to be for the departments, boards, committees, agencies and officers specified in the warrant all in accordance with Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 44, Section 53E $\frac{1}{2}$.

A Revolving Fund	B Department, Board, Committee, Agency or Officer Authorized to Spend from Fund	Fiscal Year 20 Spending Limit
French Park	Board of Selectmen and Buildings & Grounds	\$2,000.00
Home Compost Bins	Board of Selectmen and Board of Health	\$500.00

A Revolving Fund	B Department, Board, Committee, Agency or Officer Authorized to Spend from Fund	Fiscal Year 20 Spending Limit
Zoning Board of Appeals	Zoning Board of Appeals	\$1,000.00
Dog License & donations fund	Town Clerk	\$5,000.00
Inspector Wages	Wiring, Plumbing & Gas Inspectors, Fire	\$30,000.00
Compostable Materials	Green Committee and Board of Health	\$500.00
Recycling Proceeds	Board of Selectmen and Board of Health	\$15,000.00
Planning Board	Planning Board	\$2,500.00
French Park Dog Park	Board of Selectmen and Trustees of French Park	\$5,000.00
Wetlands	Conservation Commission	\$5,000.00
Police Road Details	Police road details	\$10,000.00
Transportation	Van service - transportation	\$10,000.00

Vote taken: motion passed by majority show of hands.

Article 7: Motion made and seconded to adopt the following General Bylaw: **The owner of property abutting a public sidewalk within Egremont shall be responsible for taking all reasonable steps to maintain the abutting sidewalk clear of snow and ice. An owner who fails to comply within 24 hours after the end of a snowfall will be fined \$10 for the first offense. Each subsequent 24-hour failure to comply will be considered a separate \$10 fine.**

Discussion ensued. Some voiced it was unfair, some questioned who would oversee clearing areas of sidewalk that was not in front of a home, some felt it would negatively impact those over age 55.

Motion was made and seconded to table the motion for a future date.

Vote taken: motion to table passed by majority show of hands.

Article 8: Motion made and seconded to transfer from free cash the sum of \$275,000 to construct a new building to house the Buildings and Grounds Department.

Questions were asked regarding using "annex building" for this purpose (estimated to cost \$1,000,000 to renovate) and will current building be sold (that will be addressed at a future Town Meeting)

Vote taken: motion passed by majority show of hands.

Article 9: Motion made and seconded to raise and appropriate the sum of \$5,212.00 for completion, maintenance and upkeep of the Pollinator Garden at French Park

Elizabeth Keene of Indian Line Farm spoke to the article. She stated this will not be an annual ask.

Vote taken: motion passed by unanimous show of hands.

Article 10: Motion made to raise and appropriate transfer the sum of \$3,450.00 for the repairs at the Town's Cemeteries.

Mary Brazie made motion to amend to transfer \$3,450.00 from Cemetery Perpetual Care for repairs at the Town's Cemeteries. Motion was seconded.

Vote taken: motion passed by unanimous show of hands.

Article 11: Motion made and seconded to raise and appropriate the sum of \$4,000.00 to make repairs at French Park.

Question was asked as to how the funds will be spent. Tom Reynolds answered \$1,500 for new fencing and \$2,500 for mulch.

Vote taken: motion passed by unanimous show of hands.

Article 12: Motion made and seconded to raise and appropriate the sum of \$9,000.00 to purchase a plow for the Highway Department.

Vote taken: motion passed by unanimous show of hands.

Article 13: Motion made and seconded to raise and appropriate the sum of \$4,500.00 to update a portion of the town's MACRS historic listings.

Susan Bachelder, former chairperson of the Historical Commission spoke to this expenditure.

Vote taken: motion passed by majority show of hands.

Article 14: Motion made and seconded to raise and appropriate the sum of \$5000.00 as the Town's 25% share of the amount of the \$20,000 specified in a grant from the Community Forest Stewardship Grant for purpose of removal of invasive plants in French Park.

Motion made and seconded to amend the motion by adding at the end thereof ", such appropriation to be conditioned on receipt of said grant."

Vote to amend: motion passed by majority show of hands

Vote taken: motion passed as amended by majority show of hands.

Article 15: Motion made and seconded to raise and appropriate the sum of \$5,000.00 to pay for tree removal on town property (other than town roads).

Vote taken: motion passed by majority show of hands

Article 16: Motion made and seconded to raise and appropriate the sum of \$20,000.00 to replace the fire/police alarm system at the Library.

Vote taken: motion passed by unanimous show of hands.

Article 17: Motion made and seconded to raise and appropriate the sum of \$55,000.00 to purchase and install a new Trash Compactor.

Vote taken: motion passed by unanimous show of hands.

Article 18: Motion made and seconded to raise and appropriate the sum of \$12,000.00 to replace the front door at Town Hall.

Vote taken: motion passed by majority show of hands.

Article 19: Motion made and seconded to raise and appropriate the sum of \$150,000.00 and to transfer from free cash the sum of \$50,000.00 to make road repairs to Town roads.

Vote taken: motion passed by a unanimous show of hands.

Article 20: Motion made and seconded to raise and appropriate the sum of \$85,000.00 to blacktop a portion of the Town Hall driveway and parking lot.

Vote taken: Motion passed by a hand count of 37 in favor, 26 opposed.

Article 21: Motion made and seconded to accept funds being provided by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts under the provisions of Chapter 90 of the General Laws, to pay for such costs as allowed by appropriate legislation in connection with the maintenance, repair, and construction of Town ways and bridges.

Vote taken: motion passed by a unanimous show of hands.

Article 22: Motion made and seconded to raise and appropriate the sum of \$15,000.00 to the special GASB 45 stabilization fund (for future retiree benefits other than pension.

Vote taken: motion passed by a majority show of hands.

Motion made and seconded to dissolve the Town Meeting. Motion passed. The Moderator dissolved the meeting at 8:05 pm.

Total Raise and Appropriate	\$ 5,764,792.00
Total Transfer Free Cash	\$ 325,000.00
Total Borrow	\$ 2,000,000.00
Transfer from Cemetery Perpetual Care	\$ 3,450.00
Transfer from Water Dept. Revenue	\$ 228,810.00
Water Department Tax Subsidy (R&A)	\$ 0.00
Total	\$ 8,322,052.00

Respectfully Submitted,

Juliette S. Haas, Egremont Town Clerk